(d) The Committee meets periodically to consider proposals from various sections of Society for revision of the rules and make suitable recommendations. The Government after consideration of the recommendations, takes suitable steps for reviewing the rules to safeguard the interests of consumers at large.

Rising prices of Edible Oils

795. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of the edible oils have been on the rise even after import of edible oils;

(b) if so, the details of the retail prices of the edible oils prevailing in the open market, in Kendriya Bhandar and Super Bazar, brand-wise in the last twelve months.

(c) the quantity of edible oils imported in the last twelve months and what mode was adopted in the sale thereof giving the prices at which it was imported and price at which the same was sold; and

(d) what benefit did the import of edible oil accrue to the people at large of the country?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) Due to the gap of over 5 lakh tonnes in the demand and supply of edible oils in the country, some rise in the prices of edible oils has been noted even after import of edible oils. The retail prices of major edible oils like mustard oil and groundnut oil at Super Bazar, Kendriya Bhandar and in the open markets are given at Annexure. (*See* Appendix 173, Annexure No. 12).

(c) Import of 1,07,013 MT of Palmolein was made by STC for the PDS during 1994-95 at CIF value of Rs. 188.94 crores. The oil was supplied States/UTs at Central Issue Price of Rs. 24,000 MT (in bulk) and Rs. 27,000 MT (in 15 Kg. tins).

(d) The imported palmolein is supplied to the people at below market price under the Public Distribution System and it has augmented the availability of edible oils in the country.

Policy to revamp existing PDS in backward areas

796. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a policy to revamp existing PDS in backward areas; and

(b) what defects have been noticed in the existing PDS system the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Revamped Public Distribution System was formally launched on 1-1-1992 for improving the reach of the Public Distribution System in the desert, drought-prone, hilly and tribal areas of the country, identified in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations.

(b) In consultation with the State Governments, it was agreed that there was a need to improve the infrastructure for Public Distribution System by opening additional Fair Price Shops, issuing ration cards to the population not covered so far, hire/construct additional godown capacity, introduce door-step delivery of PDC commodities to the Fair Price Shops and constitute Fair Price Shop Level Vigilance Committees consisting of consumers. State Governments/UT Administrations also agreed to include additional items of mass consumption such as tea, pulses, soaps